

'U. S. HELPLESS IN AIR'—MITCHELL; BLAMES DEATHS ON ADMINISTRATION

Praises GRAPHIC Drive to Arouse Nation to Perils

William Mitchell, who sacrificed his army career in a futile effort to awaken the War Department to the frightful perils from the air that menace America, wholeheartedly supports the views of Capt. Anton Heinen, renowned Zeppelin expert of the late Imperial German government, in his series of daily articles which began in The GRAPHIC yesterday.

"Our nation today," wired the former Fighting Colonel, "has a worse system of national defense than it has ever had in its history."

"All civilized nations of the world have organized first their air defense, then their land defense, then their sea defense. These three are usually combined into a single department of national defense. They have done this so as to fix the duty of each department—air, land and sea—in order to save money by having a common overhead and to have one single command to handle all forces in times of war."

"We Americans still present the disgraceful spectacle of having no department of the air, and the army and navy, organized merely for mutual indolence, entirely independent of each other, with no fixed mission to perform and both fighting for political preferment through their Washington lobbies."

"This is in many ways worse than no national defense at all, because millions of dollars are being wasted on useless battleships, useless navy yards, useless coast artillery and useless and obsolete army stations, dressed up only to give political patronage."

At Mercy of Japan

"We have no air defense anywhere, while our Pacific defenses are absolutely and entirely at the mercy of Japan."

"In spite of all the evidence about what a modern national defense should be, submitted to Congress by those who have the good of our country at heart, the bureaucrats of the army and navy and the purveyors of military equipment have been able through their Washington lobbies to prevent a readjustment."

"Our airplanes are unfit for use in war or even to fly safely in peace. There is not one single officer at the head of army or navy aviation who is a practical aviator or who has seen any actual service as a flyer in peace or in war. They are merely service politicians put in these positions to prevent the truth about aviation being told to Congress and the people by the junior officers who are the actual flyers and the only ones who really know."

"The making of airplanes for the most part has been turned over to certain manufacturers who are furnishing dangerous planes and are enriching themselves at the price of the flyers' lives."

"In practically every newspaper now is to be found the report of a flying man who has been killed. This is inexcusable and is directly chargeable to the present administration. I showed last year that it was really criminally responsible for the condition of our national defense."

"To avoid and to sidestep this, a great outcry was made by the administration about helping aviation, whereas really the bureaucratic system was entrenched more firmly than ever, the people misled by false information and our national defenses absolutely prostituted to the interests that gained

"Fighting Colonel"



WILLIAM MITCHELL

personally or financially from the existing pernicious arrangements.

The Remedy

"The people must know the facts and bring about a change. The American Legion has taken the lead, and patriotic members of Congress who are untainted by the influence of special interests now have a chance to do a great constructive thing for our country. This is the establishment of a single department of national defense, with co-equal subheads for the air forces, the land forces, the sea forces and munitions."

"Then, and then only, shall we be on the road to efficient defense of our great country and not be turned over to the tender mercies of foreigners, as is at present the case."

Sky Giants Doom Naval Armadas

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sarily dependent on the hit or miss method of the big naval guns, with their awe-inspiring but totally silly noise.

Each radio-controlled torpedo plane is a mechanically living and controllable fighter, which might even be called back to its resting place if desired.

Security Gone

The relative security which surrounds a fleet in well scouted waters would be gone.

The opposing air fleet might swoop down upon them around the center of a storm within an hour. Seemingly the attack might start from nowhere, in every cloud an enemy, unseen and unheard.

The fleet's officers might scan the horizon in vain, as gunners, their vessel tossed by storm, vainly fired their dancing guns upward at an enemy hidden somewhere in the hundred thousand cubic miles of air which served them for a target.

"Battle fleet" indeed! The only unit which can stand against the airship without suicide is the airship itself.

Let us discuss a trifle fully the possibilities of the torpedo plane.

When American planes sunk the delivered German battleship and cruiser in maneuvers off the United States coast with high explosive bombs in an incredibly short time, the conservatives among the naval experts declared that this in no way resembled the reality of war, because the planes could come down to advantage for a hit on an immovable target. This may be granted.

Proved in 1924

At the same time these experts overlooked the fact that tests with automatically controlled air tor-

pedoes were successfully carried out as long ago as 1924.

I have personally conducted successful tests in the control of sea craft by radio from an airship, and it is only a matter of organization and mechanical skill to bring these elements together.

In the later part of 1914, I tried out for the first time another important auxiliary to the warship of the air, a device which, although still little known, was later successfully developed and employed, although much of its potential usefulness was lacking during the war, because the weapons to which I have just referred—torpedo planes—had not been perfected.

A so-called "spy basket" was lowered from the ship's bottom and used at a distance of from 2,000 to 3,500 feet below.

This "basket" in form of a small airplane fuselage, with steering gear and an observation and communication system, can be sent be-

low the lower edge of any cloud in which the airship hovers noiselessly.

With the addition of a large

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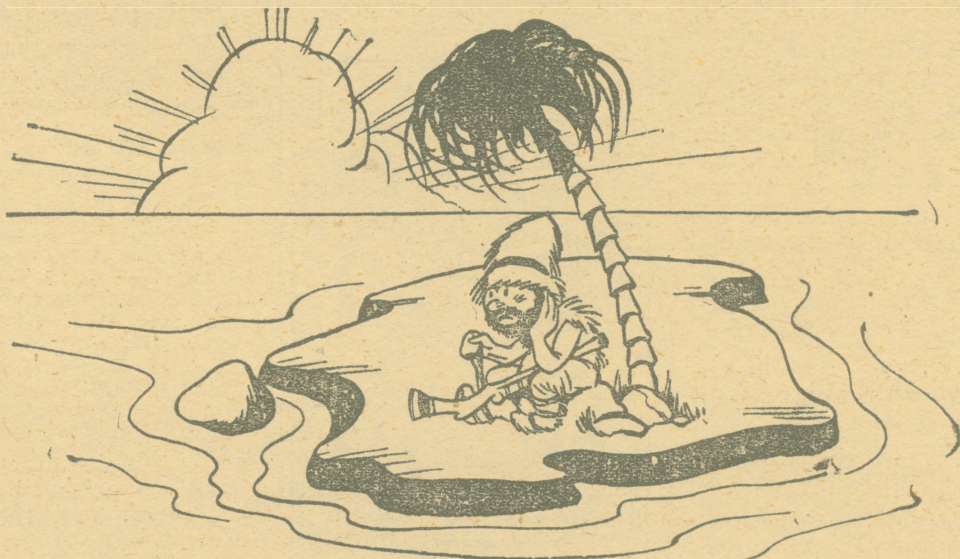
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